

RECTOR'S REPORT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMITTEE
ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

At the meeting of the Board of Governors of 17 May 1984, a resolution was passed approving in principle the mandate and composition of a committee on the status of women, pursuant to a report which had been approved by the Personnel Committee of the Board. According to this decision, the Rector was to appoint members of the committee and provide them with appropriate staff and office space. Approval in principle was conditional upon "investigation and review by the Finance Committee and/or the Board of Governors of the financial implications of implementing the recommendations."

At its meeting of June 21, 1984, the Board of Governors referred the question of the "affordability" of this committee to the Rector rather than to the Finance Committee.

Vice-Rector Graham Martin has provided a cost analysis for establishing and operating the Committee as approved by the Board of Governors. This has served as the basis for the budget included as Appendix I to this report.

In absolute terms, it is impossible to broach the issue of the affordability of this committee. It may always be argued

that new initiatives should not be undertaken in light of the current state of the university's finances. Indeed, some may urge that the only acceptable course of action is to freeze new undertakings rather than promote them.

On the other hand, the nature of the issue in this instance merits special attention. It is a most important one and one that directly concerns a major and growing part of the university community. An effort must therefore be made to proceed with action which has already received endorsement from the Board of Governors and which should be considered as a priority matter.

The following, then, is the Rector's Report, based on the above information and a number of discussions with members of the Concordia community. Its preparation has provided an opportunity for an initial yet larger assessment of the needs of our institution in the area of the status of women.

Approval in principle of the establishment of the Rector's Committee on the Status of Women denotes our community's recognition of the fact that Concordia University, like other institutions in Canada, must respond effectively to issues that emanate from the need to ensure the presence and equality of women. However, while we know that difficulties exist in this regard in many elements of our operation, to what extent and in what manner they are manifest is less clear.

In order to determine the precise confines of the problem and therefore to develop an agenda for its solution, the most effective response is the immediate establishment of the Committee as originally approved, on a review basis.

SPHERES OF CONCERN AT CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

1. Employment Practices

"Affirmative Action" is the subject of much debate, and the soon-to-appear report by Justice Abella on the subject may well provide the comprehensive assessment of current thinking and practice that will allow us to identify strategies appropriate to the university. But even with an overall strategy in mind, the detailed plan of action must be specifically developed to suit our particular institutional needs.

There are both monitoring and legislative elements here. Both require research in the first instance. Before policies can be established, those matters that can be formally monitored must be identified and mapped. Similarly, those areas that can be observed more effectively on an informal level have to be ranked.

It is essential to any approach that all constituencies participate in and benefit from the process. Experience and needs differ fundamentally; the planning stage must involve informed members of each sector.

In light of the above, the Committee approved by the Board of Governors constitutes an appropriate response. The designation of representatives from each constituency ensures the existence of a comprehensive network for the assessment of needs in each area and the formulation of recommendations for both monitoring and action.

The chair of this committee should share in discussions regarding any other initiatives that may be undertaken as a result of the second part of this section. Similarly, the mandate of the committee should include the enunciation of temporary guidelines for all constituencies in the university regarding hiring. The steady state of employment at the university suggests that, particularly at the faculty level, appointments ought not to be made without sufficient awareness of the need to foster the hiring and promotion of women.

The mandate of this committee also includes research. Such study, however, should focus on specific needs while bearing in mind the broad policies and constraints of the university.

2. The Simone de Beauvoir Institute

The Simone de Beauvoir Institute was established as an academic unit of Concordia University. It has, however, come to represent a convenient focus for all issues relating to women in the university and, in many cases, in our larger community.

For this reason, it is appropriate to include the Institute in this report.

The Institute has been expected to respond to a whole spectrum of demands that extend far beyond the traditional functions of a scholarly unit, even an interdisciplinary one. It has not, however, been organized or staffed in a manner that would allow it to support these many demands. Academic staff are seconded from departments and are responsible for the traditional activities of teaching and research within the context of a non-traditional, interdisciplinary programme. Time spent in counselling women and arranging co-curricular programmes is not a part of their commitment, even though a small number of very energetic members of faculty have managed to sustain these additional functions to date. Moreover, it is clear that the pressures on the present dedicated cadre of academics are intense, and that without reorganization the Institute will experience great difficulty in continuing on so many levels.

In that much of the difficulty stems from the absence of a staff that can, in organizational terms, manage the many non-academic tasks in a way that supports the faculty in their primary academic tasks, the solution here may lie in the establishment of a Women's Centre for Concordia University. While this could be done within the context of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute, it would require a rationalization of the many roles

fulfilled at present and the assignment of additional resources. Discussion should also take cognizance of the presence of Le Centre des Femmes de Montréal in our community; possibilities for co-operation and liaison should be explored. Finally, such a Centre should have a close working relationship with the Institute, for the non-academic functions it would serve are important complements to the concept of women's studies as an academic discipline.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board of Governors:

1. Authorize the establishment of the Rector's Committee on the Status of Women, with the following membership:

- an undergraduate student;
- a graduate student;
- a full-time faculty member;
- a part-time faculty member;
- a full-time staff member;
- a part-time staff member;
- a member of the Administration;
- the Rector or his representative;
- the Advisor to the Rector on the Status of Women, as chair.

Appointments are to be made by the Rector in accordance with the procedure set out in PC-84-4-D14(Rev.).

2. Approve the provision of support personnel to the Committee, as follows:
 - the Advisor to the Rector on the Status of Women, as a full-time staff appointment;
 - part-time secretary;
 - research staff, on a temporary or contractual basis.
3. Approve the budget appended to this report.
4. Include in the mandate of the Committee an investigation into the advisability of setting up a Women's Centre at Concordia University, with a complete review of its resource implications.
5. Request the Rector to present the Board with an annual review and report on the activities of the Committee.

APPENDIX I

Rector's Committee on the Status of Women--Proposed budget
for first year of operation.

OPERATING BUDGET

Salaries

Advisor to the Rector	\$ 30,000.00
Part-time secretary	10,000.00
Research Staff	15,000.00
Benefits	7,000.00

Non-salary

Office supplies and postage	\$ 5,000.00
Travel and expenses	2,000.00

Capital

Office furnishings	\$ 4,000.00
Office equipment	2,000.00

Space

Offices (400 sq.ft. x \$13.)	\$ 5,000.00
TOTAL	<u>\$ 80,000.00</u>

75 percent of this total can be provided through the Office of the Rector. Additional contributions will be sought from other sources within the university.